STORIES OF CREATION

In the beginning, there was nothing, only an endless ocean. From the water emerged a golden egg. It broke open to reveal Brahma, who had created himself within it. Emerging from the egg, Brahma started to make the universe – the earth, heaven, and human beings. But this was only the beginning of events that would take place on Brahma's earth.
The arrogant king Vena tyrannised over creation.
The earth herself, Bhoomi Devi, became barren and inhospitable.
Later, the powerful Prachetas gave themselves up to meditation, abandoning the earth.
These stories from the Brahma Purana talk of the earth as it was, just after it was created, and of Brahma's role in the cycle of creation.

EPICS & MYTHOLOGY

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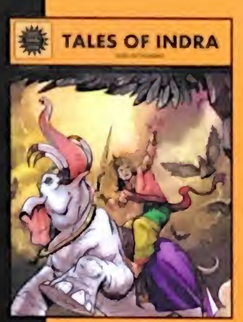

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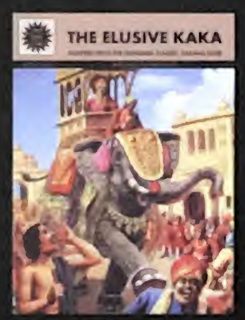
BRAVEHEARTS



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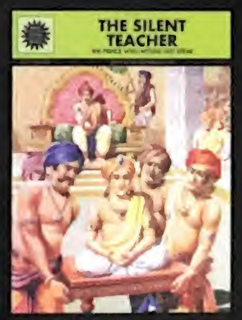

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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

STORIES OF CREATION

FROM THE BRAHMA PURANA

Vol 832 | ₹50

STORIES OF CREATION

THE FOREST OF NAIMISHARANYA WAS THE IDEAL PLACE FOR AN ASHRAM. IT WAS PEACEFUL AND THE WEATHER WAS ALWAYS LOVELY. FRUITS AND FLOWERS GREW IN ABUNDANCE. THE SAGES LIVED IN COMPLETE HARMONY WITH THE ANIMALS OF THE FOREST.

THE SAGES OF NAIMISHARANYA DECIDED TO HOLD A GRAND YAGNA, ONE THAT WOULD LAST TWELVE YEARS. AS THE YAGNA BEGAN, RISHIS FROM ALL OVER INDIA CAME TO THE FOREST TO ATTEND IT.

IT'S LOMAHARSHANA!

LOMAHARSHANA WAS A DISCIPLE OF VEDA VYASA, AUTHOR OF THE MAHABHARATA. THE OTHER SAGES WELCOMED HIM WITH FLOWERS.

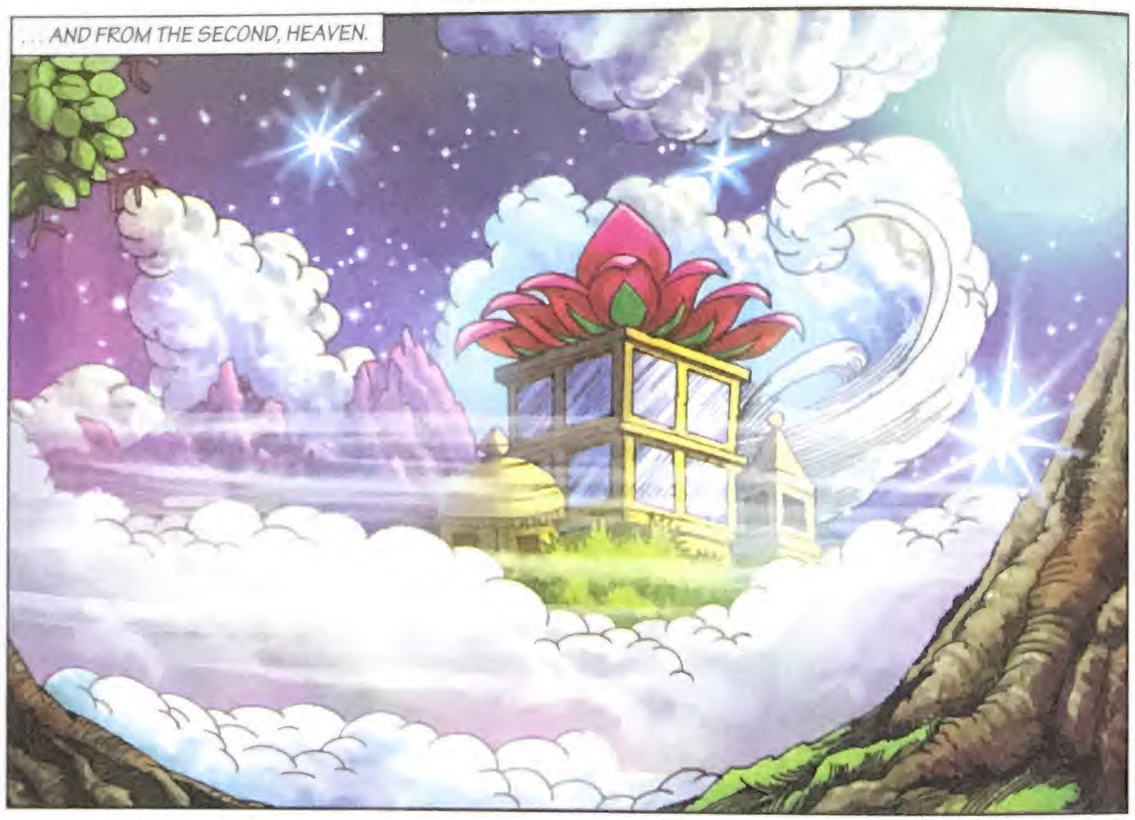
ON THIS OCCASION, YOU MUST RECITE TO US THE THINGS YOU HAVE LEARNT FROM YOUR GURU.

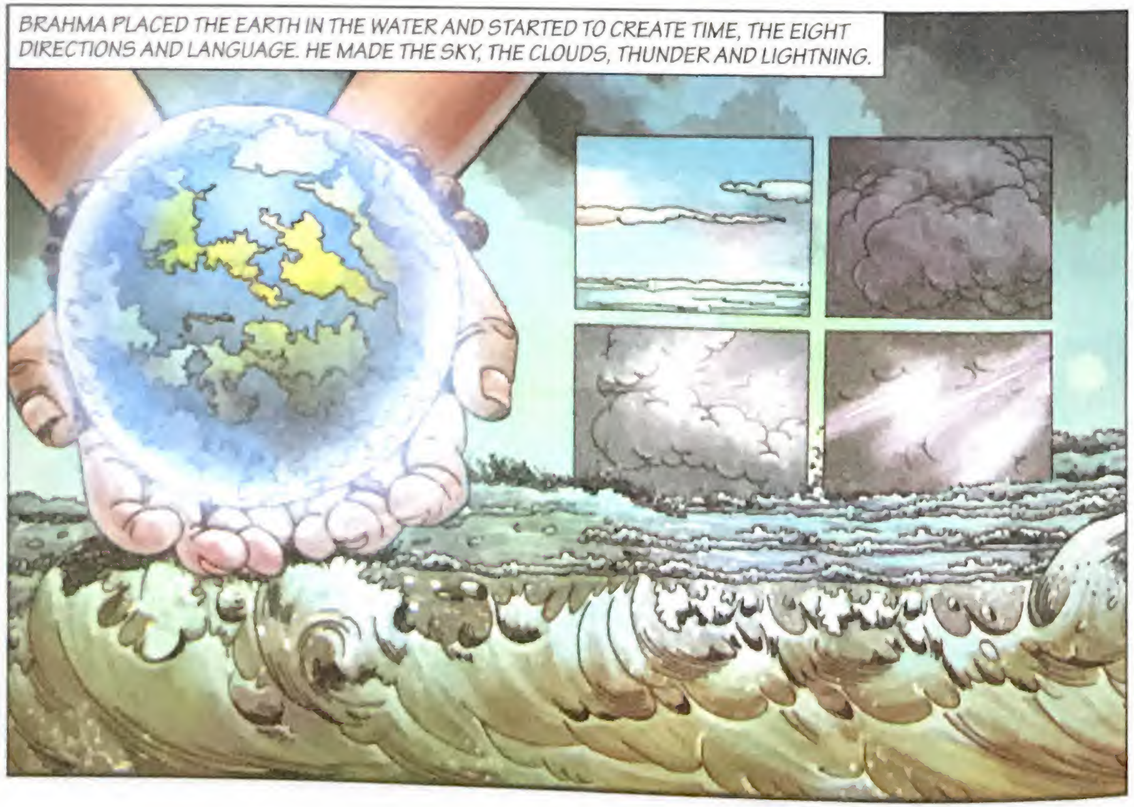
VERY WELL.

IN THE VERY BEGINNING, THERE WAS WATER EVERYWHERE AND NOTHING ELSE. FROM THIS WATER EMERGED A GOLDEN EGG.

THE EGG SPLIT AND OUT OF IT CAME BRAHMA, WHO HAD CREATED HIMSELF WITHIN THE EGG. HE IS CALLED 'SWAYAMBHU', MEANING SELF-BORN.

FROM THE FIRST HALF OF THE EGG, BRAHMA CREATED THE EARTH...


. . . AND FROM THE SECOND, HEAVEN.


BRAHMA PLACED THE EARTH IN THE WATER AND STARTED TO CREATE TIME, THE EIGHT DIRECTIONS AND LANGUAGE. HE MADE THE SKY, THE CLOUDS, THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

BUT HE NEEDED HELP. SO –
YOU ARE THE PRAJAPATIS, THE LORDS OF PEOPLE. YOU WILL HELP ME CREATE AND POPULATE THE WORLD.

THE PRAJAPATIS IMMERSED THEMSELVES IN TAPAS*, INSTEAD OF HELPING BRAHMA, PAYING NO ATTENTION TO THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

BRAHMA GREW ANGRY.

IF THEY WON'T CREATE, I WILL DESTROY!

AND FROM HIS ANGER WAS BORN RUDRA, THE GOD OF DESTRUCTION –

* MEDITATION

FATHER BRAHMA, DO NOT DESTROY THE EARTH!

WE WILL DO AS YOU SAY.

BRAHMA WAS PACIFIED.

THE PRAJAPATIS CREATED GODS AND SAGES. BRAHMA MADE THE FOUR VEDAS* TO GUIDE THEM.

BUT SOON –

WE HAVE HELPED YOU, LORD BRAHMA. PLEASE, LET US GO BACK TO OUR MEDITATION.

VERY WELL.

BUT WHO WILL CONTINUE CREATION NOW?

FROM THE TWO SIDES OF BRAHMA'S BODY WERE BORN THE FIRST HUMANS, MANU AND SHATARUPA.

YOU WILL LIVE ON MY EARTH AND SO WILL YOUR DESCENDANTS.

* SACRED SCRIPTURES

VENA

MANU AND SHATARUPA'S DESCENDANTS PEOPLED BRAHMA'S CREATION. DOWN MANU'S LINE, WAS A GENTLE AND PIOUS KING NAMED ANGA. HE MARRIED SUNITHA, THE DAUGHTER OF MRITYU, OR DEATH.

SUNITHA WAS THE MANASA PUTRA* OF MRITYU, WHO WAS SO FEARSOME THAT HE HAD NO WIFE.

SUNITHA AND ANGA HAD A SON, WHOM THEY NAMED VENA.

HE WILL MAKE A FINE KING ONE DAY.

THE ENTIRE KINGDOM REJOICED.

* A CHILD BORN OF THE MIND

THE YOUNG PRINCE SPENT A LOT OF TIME WITH HIS GRANDFATHER, MRITYU.

MRITYU TRAVELLED THE EARTH VISITING THOSE FOR WHOM IT WAS TIME TO DIE.

TAK-TAK

DON'T TAKE ME, PLEASE.

MRITYU WAS UNMOVED.

DID YOU SEE HIS FEAR? PEOPLE ARE SO EASILY COWED AND TERRIFIED!

VENA GREW UP FULL OF CONTEMPT FOR HUMAN BEINGS.

WILL SOMEONE STOP THIS WOMAN'S COMPLAINING? GUARDS! FLOG HER!

YOUR DUTY IS TO PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE, NOT TO FRIGHTEN THEM.

BUT THEY ARE ONLY SUBJECTS!

I BLAME MYSELF FOR YOUR BEHAVIOUR. I WILL GIVE UP THE THRONE, GO TO THE FOREST AND DO PENANCE.

AND SO VENA BECAME THE SOLE RULER.

HE LEVIED HEAVY TAXES, AND SHOWED NO PITY.

SIRE, OUR VILLAGE HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY DACOITS...

YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR TAXES, AND YOU DARE COMPLAIN TO ME? GUARDS! BEHEAD HIM!

THIS IS NOT RIGHT!

IF WE SAY ANYTHING, HE'LL HAVE US BEATEN OR KILLED TOO!

VENA'S SUBJECTS WERE TOO AFRAID TO PROTEST. HE GOT MORE AND MORE TYRANNICAL.

MY SUBJECTS SHOULD WORSHIP ME! ALL PRAYERS AND SACRIFICES SHOULD BE MADE TO ME. ANYONE WHO WORSHIPS THE GODS WILL BE KILLED.

WORD OF VENA'S REIGN OF TERROR REACHED THE SAGES OF THE KINGDOM.

THE KING IS TOO ARROGANT. HE EVEN PUTS HIMSELF ABOVE THE GODS!

WE MUST TRY TO REASON WITH HIM.

SO THE SAGES WENT TO VENA.

YOUR DUTY IS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE. BY SCORNING THE GODS, YOU BRING DESTRUCTION ON YOUR SUBJECTS AND YOURSELF.

HA HA HA!

I AM MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY GOD. WORSHIP ME, OR LEAVE!

THE SAGES WAITED PATIENTLY FOR VENA TO FINISH SHOUTING. THEN TOGETHER, THEY RELEASED THEIR BREATHS ...

AAAAAH!

OM!

... AND WITH IT, ALL THE POWER THEY HAD ACCUMULATED OVER THEIR YEARS OF PENANCE AND RIGHTEOUS LIVING.

IT KILLED THE ARROGANT KING.

THE PEOPLE REJOICED AT VENA'S DEATH, BUT THE SAGES WERE FACED WITH A NEW PROBLEM.

WE NEED TO FIND A NEW RULER, TO SET RIGHT THE CHAOS VENA UNLEASHED.

BUT WHO? THE RIGHTFUL HEIR LIES DEAD BY OUR HANDS.

VENA WAS ARROGANT AND HARSH BUT THERE WAS SOME GOOD IN HIM.

IF WE COULD JUST REMOVE THE EVIL...

SO THE SAGES SET TO KNEADING VENA'S CORPSE.

THERE GOES ALL THAT WAS EVIL IN VENA. NOW LET'S KNEAD HIS ARMS AND SEE.

AS THE SAGES KNEADED VENA'S ARMS, THERE WAS A GLOW AND A NEW KING EMERGED.

HE WAS NAMED PRUTHA. ALL THE GODS GATHERED FOR HIS CORONATION. HE WAS CROWNED BY BRAHMA HIMSELF.

O PRUTHA, I PROCLAIM YOU LORD OF THE EARTH.

PRUTHA'S REIGN BEGAN. THE RELIEVED SAGES PERFORMED A GREAT YAGNA TO ENSURE PROSPERITY. OUT OF THE FIRE EMERGED THE SUTAS AND THE MAGADHAS – MUSICIANS AND STORY-TELLERS.

WHAT SHALL WE SING, O SAGES?

SING THE NEW KING'S PRAISES!

BUT HE HASN'T DONE ANYTHING YET!

SING OF HIS FUTURE DEEDS THEN.

SO THEY SANG OF THE PEACE OF PRUTHA'S RULE. THEY SANG OF ABUNDANCE AND PLENTY.

AND DURING PRUTHA'S REIGN THE LAND PROSPERED.

IT FLOWED WITH MILK AND HONEY.

FLOWERS BLOOMED EVERYWHERE, FRUITS...

WHAT PROSPERITY? WHAT ABUNDANCE?

OUR LAND IS BARREN. WE BARELY SURVIVE.

PRUTHA WAS EAGER TO IMPROVE HIS KINGDOM, WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER VENA'S MISRULE FOR SO LONG.

WHAT DO YOU LACK, MY SUBJECTS? TELL ME, AND I WILL TRY TO HELP YOU.

CAN WE TELL HIM THE TRUTH?

WHAT IF HE'S LIKE VENA? WE'LL SAY NOTHING.

WHAT IS IT? YOU MUSTN'T BE SCARED.

THE THING IS, SIRE...

...THE PEOPLE ARE STARVING. THE EARTH IS INFERTILE. WE CANNOT GROW ANYTHING EXCEPT BULBS AND ROOTS.

IS THAT SO?

HE PICKED UP HIS BOW, AJAGAVA, AND STALKED OUT OF THE THRONE ROOM.

I WILL FIND THE EARTH AND TEACH HER A LESSON! HOW DARE SHE STARVE MY SUBJECTS!

THE EARTH HEARD THAT PRUTHA WAS LOOKING FOR HER. SHE WAS FRIGHTENED.

I CANNOT LET HIM CATCH ME! WHAT SHOULD I...

... I KNOW!

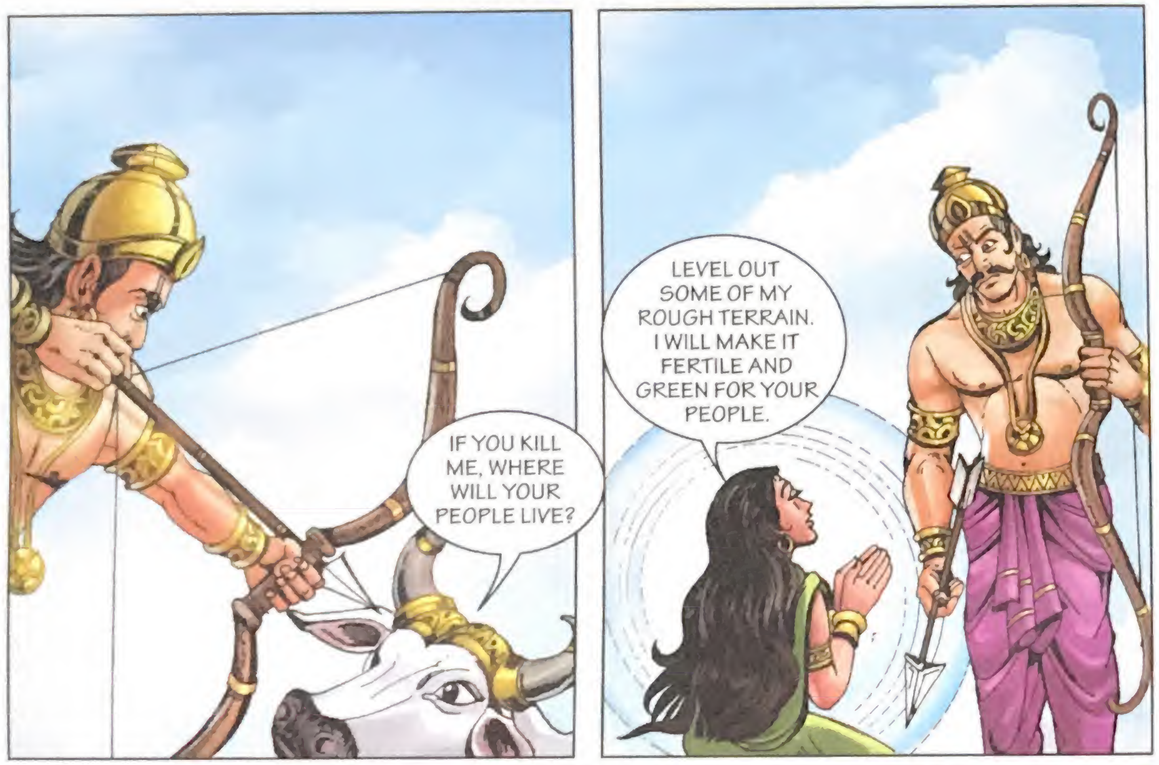
THE EARTH TRANSFORMED HERSELF INTO A COW, AND FLED.

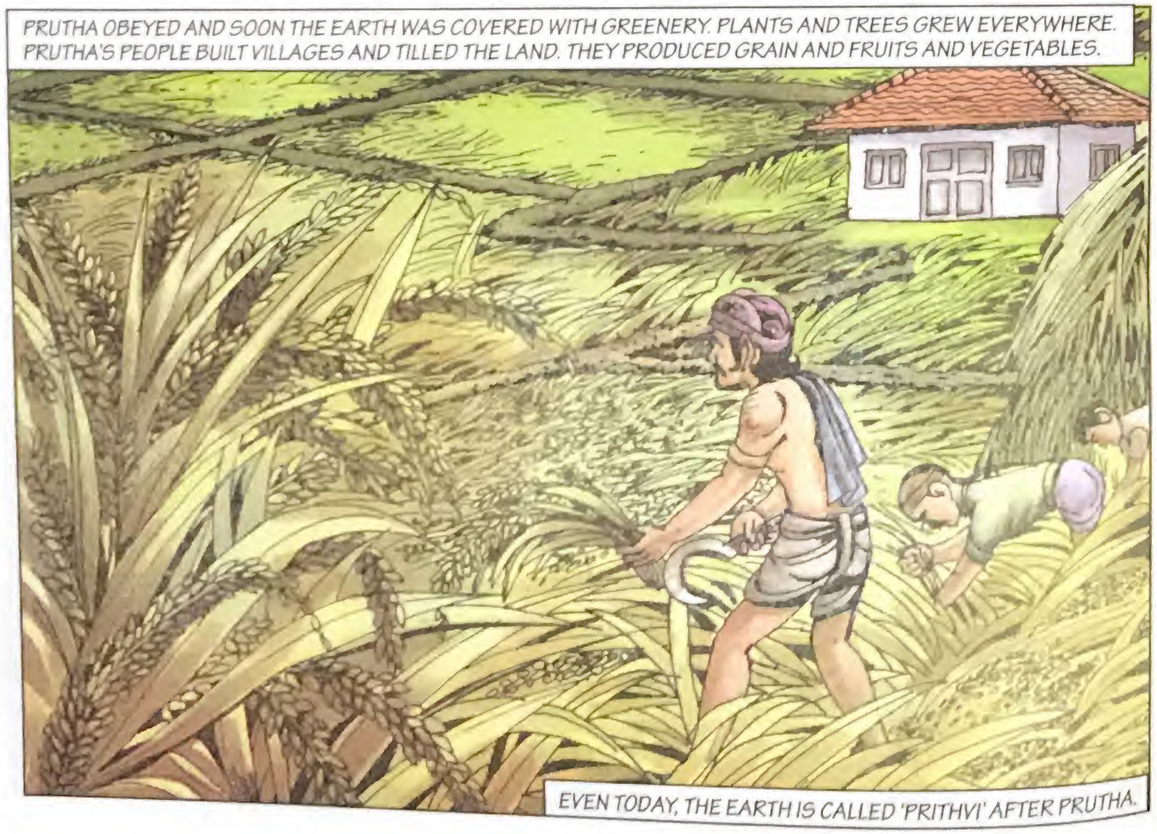
BUT WHEREVER SHE WENT...

... THE EARTH COULD NOT ESCAPE PRUTHA.

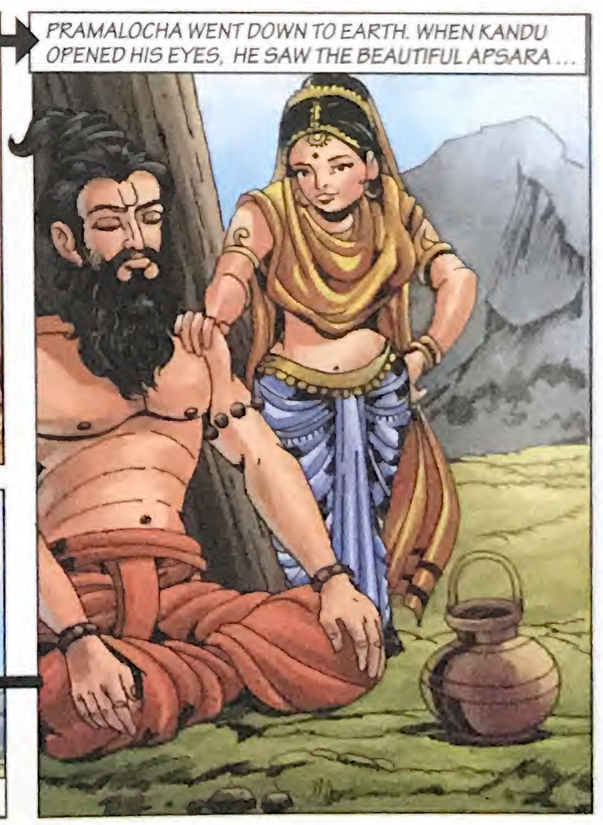
FINALLY -

FORGIVE ME, PRUTHA.





MARISHA AND THE PRACHETAS



THEY GOT MARRIED. KANDU FORGOT ALL ABOUT HIS PENANCE. WHEN A HUNDRED YEARS HAD PASSED –

I MUST GO BACK TO DEVALOKA. I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR A LONG TIME.

ALREADY? STAY A LITTLE LONGER.

PRAMALOCHA STAYED, AND THE CENTURIES ROLLED BY, LEAVING THEM UNTOUCHED. KANDU STILL DID NOT NOTICE HOW LONG IT HAD BEEN. ONE DAY, PRAMALOCHA FOUND SHE WAS PREGNANT.

I'VE STAYED TOO LONG. I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW.

BUT YOU ONLY GOT HERE IN THE MORNING. IT'S EVENING NOW! WHY ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY?

YOU ARE MISTAKEN. I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU FOR 907 YEARS, SIX MONTHS, AND THREE DAYS.

900 YEARS! I HAVE ABANDONED MY PENANCE FOR 900 YEARS? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?

PRAMALOCHA FLED. SHE RAN THROUGH THE FOREST, SHIVERING.

IN HER FEAR, THE CHILD SHE WAS CARRYING FLEW OUT OF HER BODY, AS DROPS OF SWEAT.

SHE PAUSED TO WIPE HER SWEAT AWAY ON THE LEAVES, AND FLEW BACK TO HEAVEN.

VAYU, THE WIND GOD GATHERED UP THE LEAVES AND HELD THEM UP TO THE MOON GOD.

NOURISHED BY THE MOON'S RAYS, THE DROPLETS GREW INTO A LITTLE GIRL, MARISHA.

THE TREES OF THE FOREST ADOPTED HER AS THEIR OWN DAUGHTER AND LOOKED AFTER HER.

OUTSIDE THE FOREST, THE LAND WAS BEING RULED BY KING PRACHINA VARAHI. BUT HIS TEN SONS, THE PRACHETAS, WERE MAKING HIM VERY UNHAPPY INDEED –

WE DON'T CARE FOR POWER OR RICHES.

WE WANT ONLY TO MEDITATE.

I AM OLD, MY SONS. I WANT TO HAND OVER THE KINGDOM TO YOU AND LIVE MY LAST DAYS IN THE FOREST.

ABANDONING THEIR KINGDOM, THE PRACHETAS RETIRED DEEP INTO THE OCEAN. FOR 10,000 YEARS THEY SAT IN PENANCE.

ON EARTH, THERE WAS CHAOS AS THE FORESTS BEGAN TO SPREAD, UNGOVERNED.

AS TIME PASSED, THE FORESTS GREW LARGER AND THICKER, UNTIL THEY ENVELOPED THE ENTIRE EARTH. THEY GREW SO DENSE THAT NO AIR COULD ENTER.

A GROUP OF SAGES WENT TO THE PRACHETAS –

O KINGS! YOUR PEOPLE WILL PERISH IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING TO THE TREES! THEY HAVE COVERED THE EARTH.

DISTURBED FROM THEIR MEDITATION, THE PRACHETAS WERE FURIOUS.

HOW DARE THE TREES CHOKE OUR PEOPLE!

TOGETHER, THEY OPENED THEIR MOUTHS, AND BLEW OUT A MIXTURE OF AIR AND FIRE. . .

. . .WHICH BURNT EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.

SOON THE GREAT FOREST WAS ALMOST UTTERLY DESTROYED.

SOMA THE MOON GOD DECIDED TO INTERVENE –

STOP DESTROYING THE FORESTS, O PRACHETAS. YOUR PEOPLE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT TREES.

THE PRACHETAS UNDERSTOOD. AS A TRUCE, THEY MARRIED MARISHA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE TREES.

THEIR SON WAS A POWERFUL AND JUST KING, DAKSHA PRAJAPATI. THE PRACHETAS WENT BACK TO THEIR PENANCE, LEAVING THEIR KINGDOM IN HIS CAPABLE HANDS.

DAKSHA HAD FIFTY DAUGHTERS. THEIR OFFSPRING – DEMONS, BIRDS, ANIMALS, GANDHARVAS, APSARAS AND MORE GODS – POPULATED THE UNIVERSE.

AS LOMAHARSHANA FINISHED, IT WAS EVENING.

AND THEN?

TIME WENT ON. AS THE EARTH AGED, EACH YUGA GREW WORSE - MORE CORRUPT, MORE CRUEL.

THE FIRST YUGA WAS THE KRITA YUGA OR SATYA YUGA. HUMANS, GODS AND BEASTS LIVED TOGETHER IN PEACE AND HARMONY.

THEN CAME THE TRETA YUGA, WHEN CONFLICTS BEGAN TO ARISE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WITH IT VIOLENCE AND SORROW.

IN THIS YUGA, VISHNU CAME TO EARTH IN HIS INCARNATIONS AS PARASHURAMA AND RAMA.

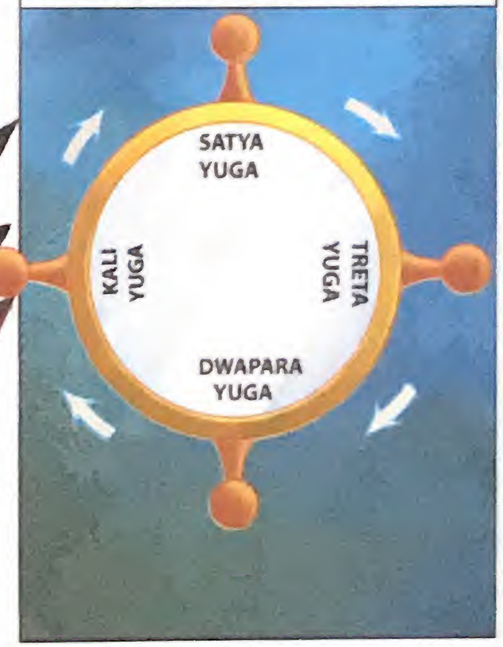
THE THIRD YUGA WAS THE DWAPARA, AND THE BATTLES GREW FIERCER AND FIERCER ...

... ENDING IN THE GREAT WAR, THE MAHABHARATA. THOUSANDS PERISHED IN THIS WAR WHICH WAS PRESIDED OVER BY VISHNU, INCARNATED AS KRISHNA.

THE LAST YUGA IS THE KALI YUGA, A TIME OF SIN, CORRUPTION, AND GREAT DESTRUCTION.

WHEN THE KALI YUGA ENDS, THE EARTH IS CLEANSED AND THE SATYA YUGA STARTS AGAIN.

THIS CYCLE OF YUGAS HAPPENS SEVENTY ONE TIMES. THEN BRAHMA BEGINS PRALAYA, OR TOTAL DESTRUCTION, AND DESTROYS ALL HIS CREATIONS EXCEPT FOR HEAVEN, EARTH, THE GODS, THE SAGES AND THE VEDAS.



AFTER FOURTEEN PRALAYAS, BRAHMA GOES TO SLEEP, AND EVERYTHING HE HAS MADE DISSOLVES. ALL CREATION IS RETURNED TO THE ETERNAL OCEAN FROM WHICH BRAHMA CREATED IT.

AND WITH THIS, NIGHT FALLS FOR BRAHMA. HE SLEEPS ALONE IN THE DARK, DREAMING OF THE NEXT DAY WHEN HE WILL AWAKE AND CREATE A NEW WORLD.